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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2019  
TAGS: [PINR](#) [BBSR](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ZA](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN BUSINESS PRESENCE IN ZAMBIA (C-C19-01825)  
REF: STATE 88241

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Booth for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) This cable is a response to the reftel information request regarding Russia's economic presence in sub-sarahan Africa. Russia currently does not have a large economic presence in Zambia. We are unaware of significant Russian trade representation in Zambia. Russian trade development is managed by the Russian embassy in Lusaka, and those efforts have been somewhat moribund to date. The Russian embassy worked to develop a Zambia-Russia Business Council, but it appears to be relatively inactive and consists primarily of Zambians who previously studied in Russia and the former Soviet Union. Trade between Russia and Zambia is minimal, and represents less than five percent of Zambian exports and imports.

¶2. (C) While there is currently little large-scale Russian economic presence in Zambia, we have learned that Russian companies are working to enter the telecom and fuel supply markets. In telecom, a consortium between Vimplecom, Russia's second largest mobile phone operator, and Alfa Telecom International Mobile (Altimo), the telecom investment arm of Alfa Group, is reported to be one of seven bidders short-listed for the partial privatization of state-owned telecom company Zamtel. Lukoil is reportedly angling to take over the fuel and petroluem supply contract that is currently held by a Kuwaiti company. The company is actively working with senior Zambian government officials to get the contract out for bid and appears to have high-level Zambian government (GRZ) support. However, the GRZ reportedly decided to delay the re-bidding process due to the political sensitivity surrounding fuel given the recent shortages the country is experiencing since the closure of the refinery in Zambia for annual maintenance and the withdrawal of Total from its 50 percent ownership of the refinery (co-owned with the GRZ).  
BOOTH